REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-24, 33-38 and 48-52 are pending in the captioned application and are finally rejected. Reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The pending claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as been anticipated by PCT Publication No. WO 90/05306 to Malmqvist et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants submit that for an invention to be anticipated by a certain reference, every element/limitation must be disclosed in the reference. However, in the current case, Malmqvist et al. clearly does not teach several of the elements/limitations of each of the claimed invention.

Independent claim 1 of the invention discloses an assay method including steps (a) through (h). The claim requires that a set of different groups of ligands are immobilized on different solid support surface areas (step d), followed by sequential contact of the surface areas by a set of different groups of a plurality of analytes for ligand binding (step g). The interaction between the analytes and the ligands in each group are subsequently detected (step h) to complete the assay. It is clearly stated in the claim that there are multiple different ligands (step b) and multiple different

analytes (step e) forming each of the respective groups. The claim also requires that at least about 75% of the analytes have substantially no cross-reactivity to other ligands than the one specific binding partner (step e).

Applicants submit that Malmqvist et al. does not teach the claimed combination, i.e. immobilizing a set of different groups of ligands on different solid support surface areas, followed by sequential contact of the surface areas by a set of different groups of analytes to detect the interaction between analytes and ligands in each group. In addition, Malmqvist et al. does not teach that at least about 75% of the analytes have substantially no cross-reactivity to other ligands than the one specific binding partner. Applicants submit that Malmqvist et al. clearly relates to the analysis of one macromolecule (whether it being ligand or analyte). Even if different epitopes are involved, they are still epitopes on one and the same macromolecule.

The Examiner states that Malmqvist et al. teaches macromolecular mixtures (i.e. several analytes), and references page 14 of Malmqvist et al. (in the Office action dated December 21, 2006) as support. Applicants respectfully assert that the relevant section on page 14 of Malmqvist et al. is not related to the claimed invention. Applicants submit that the paragraphs on page 14 refer to a method of identifying antibodies (ligands) against the various proteins. Thereafter each protein, one at the time, is analyzed using the obtained antibodies. Thus, the section does not describe the method of the present invention.

The Examiner also states that the claims do not recite "determining binding rates," and therefore, this feature could not be relied upon to differentiate from the reference. Applicants respectfully disagree. In response, Applicants submit that the claims do teach "determine an amount of binding" ((step h) of claim 1), which is equivalent to "determine the binding rate". Applicants submit that Malmqvist et al. does not teach "determine an amount of binding" as claimed.

The distinguishing features discussed above in the context of independent claim 1 are also recited in independent claims 33 and 48 in the same or similar manner. Thus, none of the independent claims are anticipated by Malmqvist et al., nor can any of the dependent claims be anticipated since they contain all the limitations of the independent claims from which they depend.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the pending claims are patentable over Malmqvist et al. and request that this ground of rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully assert that the claims are in allowable form and earnestly solicit the allowance of the claims 1-24, 33-38 and 48-52.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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